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ANTHROPOMORPHIC

ANTARCTIC BLAST
SEPTEMBER 1994

REFLECTIONS ON SAN DIEGO

by Ben Dunn

Well, another San Diego Comic Con has come and gone. This year's Con was purported to be the biggest ever (approximately 50,000 people showed up from what I heard). Which leads me to conclude that people are becoming more aware of the comics industry...or does it? I saw many new companies, but I also noticed that many companies that were there last year did not show up this year. Were these new companies filling a vacuum or signs of definite growth in the industry. It is hard to say. All I can say is that we did pretty good.

I decided not to do any sketching this year in order to spend more time with my friends and acquaintances. In the past I used to do sketches to help subsidize AP's expense in going to San Diego, so I never really got a chance to see much of the Con or San Diego. However, AP's growth this past year was tremendous and our inventory had grown to the point that doing sketches was simply not needed from me. So this year I decided to simply enjoy myself and not work during the Con. Needless to say, I did enjoy myself, but as I wandered the show I began to notice certain things that both delighted and depressed me.

What made me happy was seeing how well-received we were by our readers and to see how many more we picked up since last year. In fact we had several pros come by our table and pick up stuff. I was able to talk to many seasoned pros and a lot of up-and-coming pros (they know who they are). I was able to get feedback on our books to see what we were doing well and what we were doing wrong. It was quite an experience.

Having more time than usual, I wandered the floor and was able to see many of the dealers and their wares. My conclusion would have been that if a nuclear bomb were to wipe out the San Diego Comic Con, every single major Gold and Silver Age comic would have been wiped out as well. I saw so many major key books on display that it wasn't even funny. I thought these suckers were supposed to be rare or something. I do not collect comics anymore (except for the odd issue or two), but I like looking at them. Something about old comics like that appeals to me. I guess, since I'm a history buff, these books act sort of like a window into the past. Not just my past but America's past. I can see how these books have changed over the years and how America has changed. It's kind of cool.

It was certainly distressing to see all the incredible displays set up by other comic companies. AP's display consisted of two spaces and a plastic sign that read "ANTARCTIC PRESS" along with some laminated color copies and comic racks for back issues. The big companies had huge monolithic displays that were impressive, but even companies smaller than AP had great displays. So next year I vow to put together a really cool display. One that can greet the AP reader in a way that will show that he or she was something special.

Another thing that sort of bothered me was the lack of AP books in general. Not that I'm complaining, mind you (more business for us), but it would have been nice to have been more prolific among dealer inventory. I guess shows like these are expensive and they must figure that they should bring books that will give them a high profit margin (though with all the price slashing one wonders). AP sold books there and people picked them up. With no discounts, no hard sell, no loud music, no special editions (except the foiled NHS #0 which was old by 4 months) people simply walked up, saw what they wanted and got it. No questions asked. Unfortunately, most of what we had was output from last year and most of this year, so many older issues could not be had.

I guess my editorial from a couple of months ago ("A LITTLE RESPECT") was actually unnecessary. At the time I was little pissed by how we were being treated and threw a little tantrum (I am human you know), but realized we were doing really well DESPITE them. It's gotten a little better though. Several of the fanzines have acknowledged our existence (thanks to books like STRANGERS IN PARADISE) though they still exclude us for the most part. I mean when was the last time you saw an ARC Comic?

Yes, San Diego reaffirmed my strength and commitment. To do better this year than last. To never rest on past victories and to forge ahead with new and better product. And to all our readers who attended San Diego Comic Con: THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Trust Us, You'll Love It.

by Herb Mallette

As the Antarctic Press heads steadily toward its tenth year, a lot of people probably think they have us pretty well figured out. We're that small but dependable company that does all those anthropomorphic and manga books, with a couple of creator-owned adventure titles thrown in on the side. A lot of people are probably getting pretty comfortable with that image of our company. Just in time for us to start changing it.

Now before all you manga and anthropomorphics fans worry too much, I'm not talking about getting out of those areas we've come to be so heavily identified with . . . I'm talking about getting into other things as well. Hopefully, by the end of next year, a **lot** of other things.

December marks the beginning of a new push for us. We've got three new, offbeat, hip kind of books coming out that month that should burst any preconceptions about Antarctic Press being stuck in just a couple of genres: **Schizo** is a book full of gleefully cynical looks at reality from Ivan Brunetti — about the nicest, most personable manic-depressive you could ask for. S.A. King's **The Naked Eye** has garnered praise from Dave Sim and Peter Bagge, among others, for its scathing wit. And **Nick Ryan: The Skull** is a loopy pulp adventure from the feverish brains of David Watkins and Kevin Miller, who know what the 1940s *should* have been like, even if they weren't.

But wait! There's more!

Also in December, Ben Dunn turns his creative skills to **Warrior Nun Areala**, an action-packed miniseries of heroics that should really turn some heads in the comics "mainstream." And then in January we're serving up more hipness with David Hahn's **Private Beach: Fun And Perils In The Trudyverse**, a series I frankly can't even describe in a single sentence. And more after that, and more, and more.

The reason for all this? Well, we turn ten years old in just a few months, and we figure it's time to start making some real noise. So we're embracing the underground, alternative side of comics and stepping out into the mainstream as well. There are readers in all genres of comics who don't have enough clever, inventive, artistic books to choose from, and our goal is to get big enough to do something about that.

Want to help? We promise you won't be disappointed.

CHECK OUT ANTARCTIC PRESS' other releases

RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

- ☐ Small-Bodied Ninja High School #3
- ☐ Small-Bodied NHS Deluxe Ed. #3
- ☐ Konny and Czu #1
- ☐ Ninja High School #42
- ☐ Knightmare #2
- ☐ Sentai #4
- ☐ Mangazine #35
- ☐ Gold Digger #15
- ☐ Furrlough #21
- ☐ Ninja High School 1994 Color T-Shirt
- ☐ Mangazine #14 (relist)
- ☐ Antarctic Press Ten-Pack
- ☐ Vanity Angel #1 (Venus)
- ☐ Emblem #4 (Venus)
- ☐ Amazing Strip #8 (Venus)
- ☐ A-Bomb #4 (Venus)
- ☐ Genus #4 (Venus)
- ☐ Bondage Fairies #1 2nd printing

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FURRLOUGH

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Publishers • Ben & Joe Dunn **Editor • Elin Winkler**
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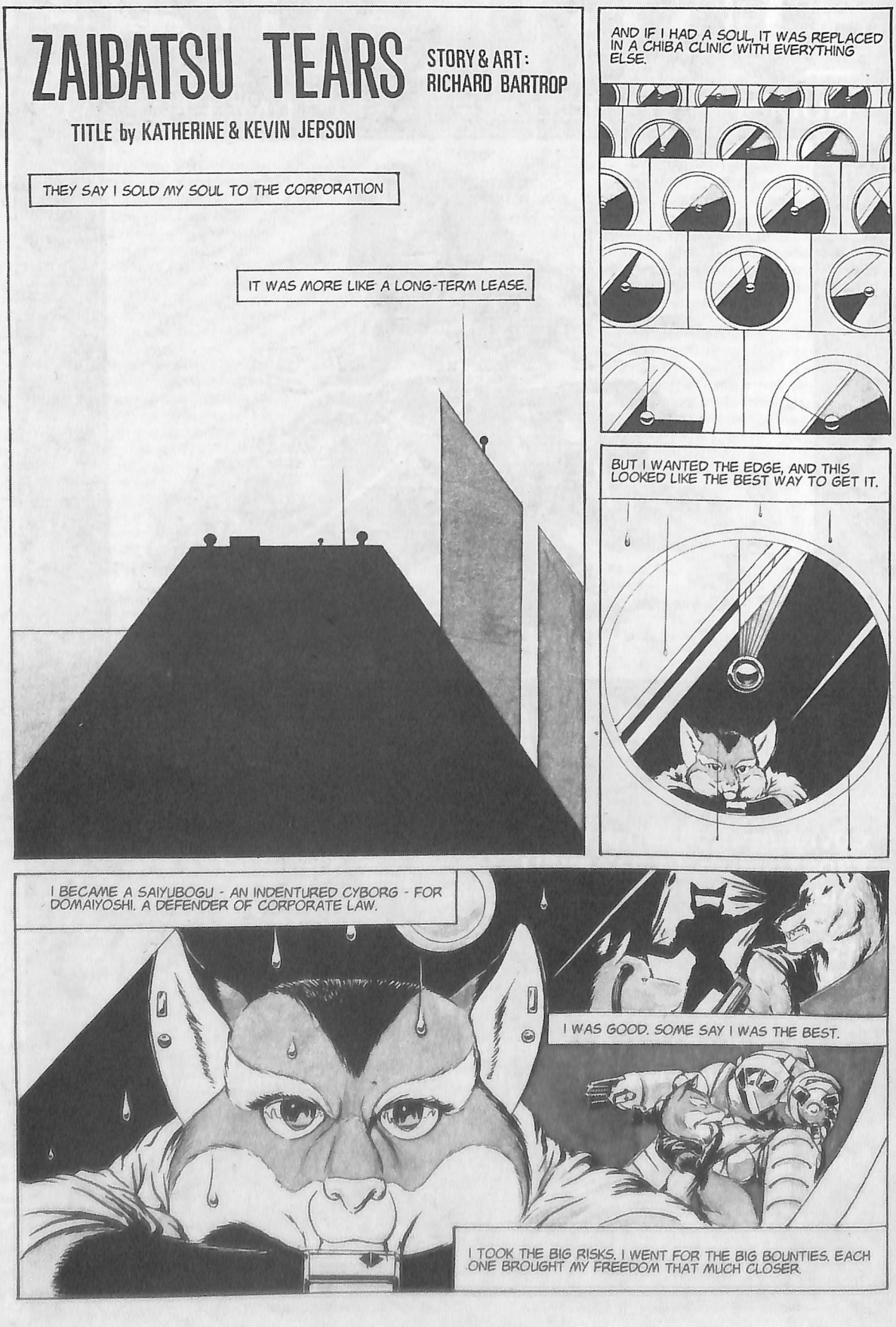
Sorry to say that events have conspired to prevent us from bringing you "Romanics" by Joe Rosales this issue. Look for its return soon!

--EW & SH

ZAIBATSU TEARS

STORY & ART: RICHARD BARTROP

TITLE by KATHERINE & KEVIN JEPSON


THEY SAY I SOLD MY SOUL TO THE CORPORATION
IT WAS MORE LIKE A LONG-TERM LEASE.
AND IF I HAD A SOUL, IT WAS REPLACED IN A CHIBA CLINIC WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.
BUT I WANTED THE EDGE, AND THIS LOOKED LIKE THE BEST WAY TO GET IT.
I BECAME A SAIYUBOGU - AN INDENTURED CYBORG - FOR DOMAIYOSHI. A DEFENDER OF CORPORATE LAW.
I WAS GOOD. SOME SAY I WAS THE BEST.
I TOOK THE BIG RISKS. I WENT FOR THE BIG BOUNTIES. EACH ONE BROUGHT MY FREEDOM THAT MUCH CLOSER.

UNTIL THEN, I WAS COMPANY PROPERTY. THEY HAD INVESTED A LOT IN ME, THEY SAID, AND THEY HAD TO PROTECT THAT INVESTMENT.

THEY IMPLANTED A TRACER SO I COULDN'T RUN. I LIVED IN A COMPANY DORM, ATE A COMPANY SPECIFIED DIET...

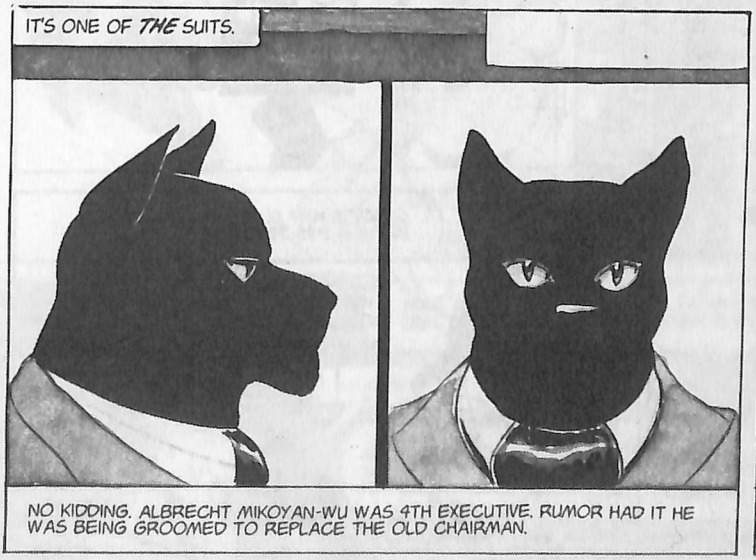
...AND THEY NEVER LET ME FORGET WHO OWNED ME.

THE TRACER WAS A COMMUNICATOR. I WAS ON CALL 24 HOURS A DAY, EVERY DAY. SOME BRIGHT YOUNG SUIT ONCE CALLED ME AT 3 AM TO MOVE A FRIDGE. WHEN MY CONTRACT IS UP, THEY'LL PUT IN AN OFF SWITCH.

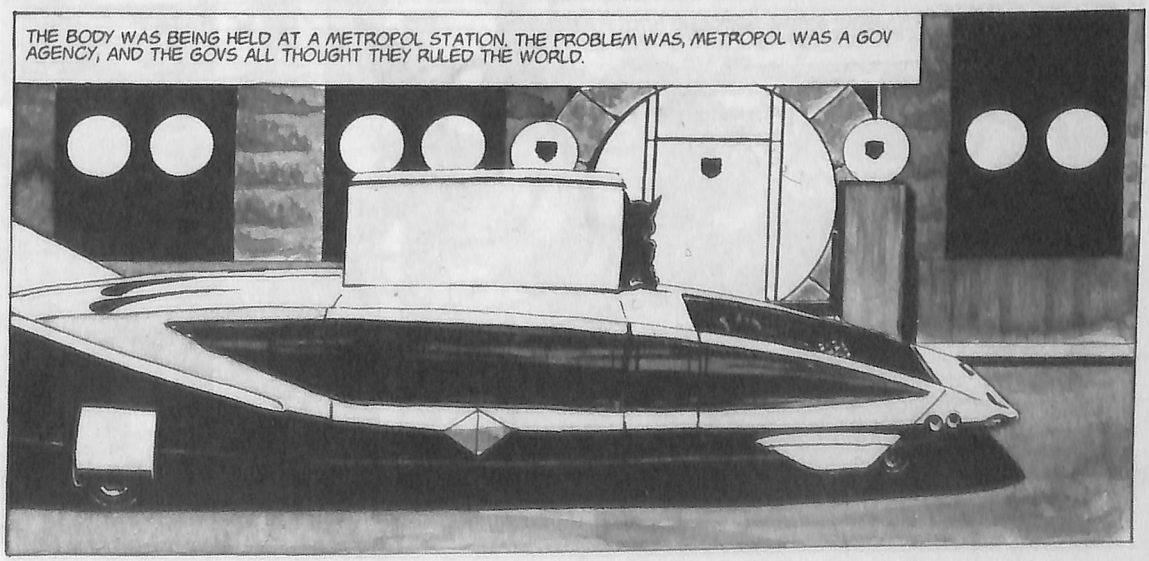
THIS IS PI. I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU LEAVE A MESSAGE, I'LL GET BACK TO YOU.
HI, RYU.
RYU WAS DOMAIYOSHI'S SAIYUBOGU HANDLER. HE TRIED TO SOUND LIKE OUR FRIEND, BUT ALWAYS CAME OFF PATRONIZING, LIKE I WAS A VERY CLEVER PET.
VERY FUNNY, PI.
BE IN MY OFFICE IN HALF AN HOUR. I HAVE AN IMPORTANT JOB FOR YOU.
I HOPE IT'S NOT ANOTHER FRIDGE.

"ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU REPRESENT THE CORPORATION, SO ACT AND DRESS ACCORDINGLY."TO ME THE CORPORATE UNIFORM WAS JUST ANOTHER REMINDER THAT I WAS PROPERTY. I HATED IT.
BUT I WASN'T GOING TO GIVE THEM ANY EXCUSES. NOT WHEN I WAS SO CLOSE.
AS SOON AS I GET OUT I'M GOING TO BURN IT. UNTIL THEN, I'D BE THE MODEL CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVE. DOLF USED TO CALL IT MY "SUIT IMPERSONATION".
DOLF. I WONDER WHAT HE'S UP TO?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR ME, RYU?
IT'S BIG, PI. A LOT OF IMPORTANT PEOPLE WILL BE WATCHING.

SOMEONE STEALING COMPANY SECRETS AGAIN?
IT'S MURDER, PI. AN EXECUTIVE.
SINCE WHEN DID THEY NEED A SAIYUBOGU TO DEAL WITH A DEAD SUIT?
NOT JUST ANY SUIT, PI...

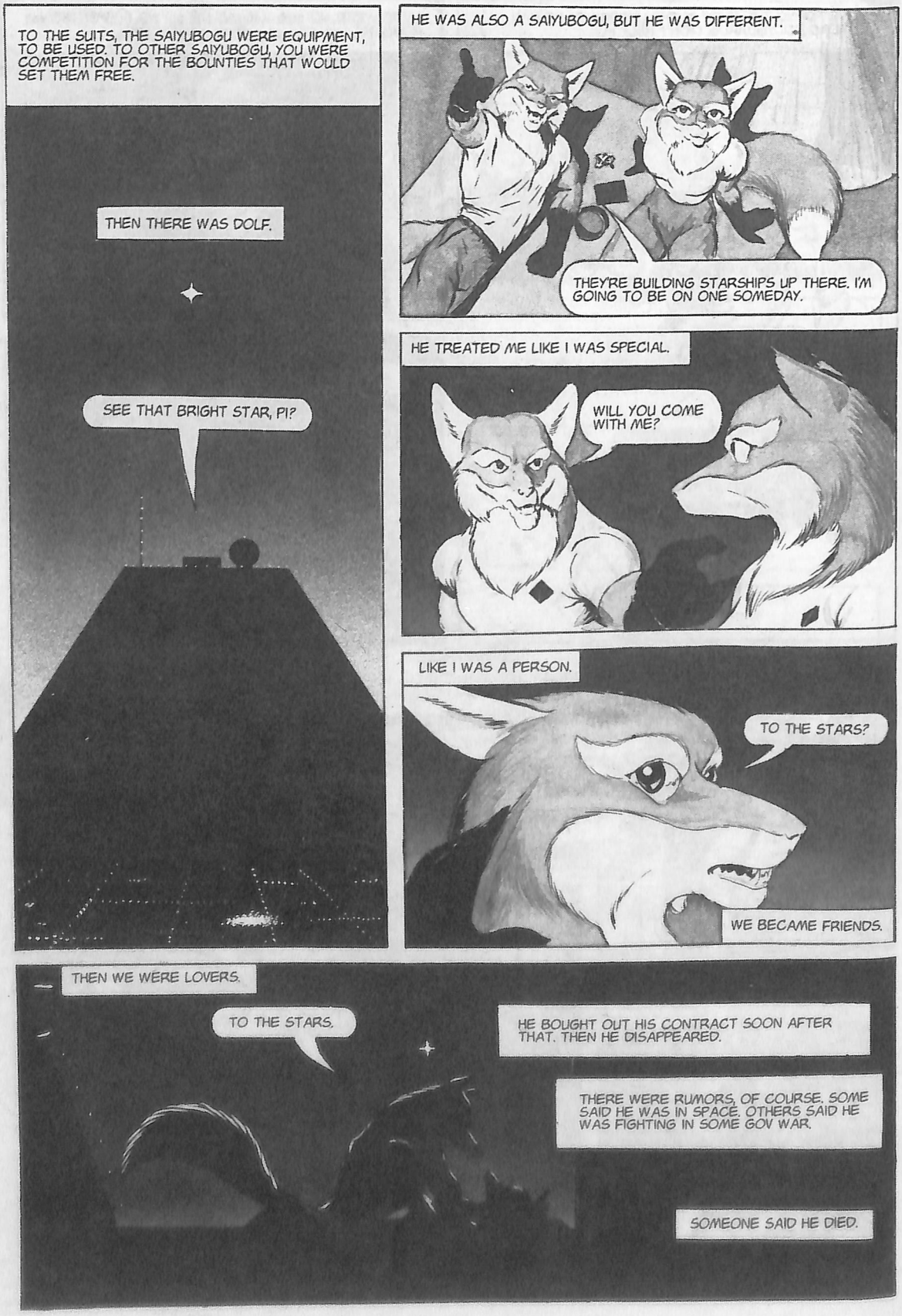

IT'S ONE OF *THE* SUITS.
NO KIDDING. ALBRECHT MIKOYAN-WU WAS 4TH EXECUTIVE. RUMOR HAD IT HE WAS BEING GROOMED TO REPLACE THE OLD CHAIRMAN.

THIS ONE WOULD WIPE OUT MY DEBTS. FIND ONE SUIT-KILLER, AND I'D BE FREE AT LAST.
SO WHY DID I HAVE SUCH A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS ONE?


THE BODY WAS BEING HELD AT A METROPOL STATION. THE PROBLEM WAS, METROPOL WAS A GOV AGENCY, AND THE GOVS ALL THOUGHT THEY RULED THE WORLD.

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS LT. TANAKA?
I'M TANAKA. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YEP. 90 KILOS OF PURE GOV ARROGANCE, LEARNED FROM A HUNDRED BAD COP SHOWS.
THE DOMAIYOSHI CORPORATION RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS THAT YOU TURN OVER ALL EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO THE MURDER OF ALBRACHT MIKOYAN-WU.
SECURITY
CYBORG, HM? SUPPOSE I REFUSE THIS "REQUEST"?
WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN, LIEUTENANT.
DAMN STRAIGHT IT ISN'T.
TELL ME, SAIYUBOGU-SAN. WHAT MAKES SOMEONE HATE FLESH SO MUCH THAT THEY'LL BECOME A SLAVE TO GET RID OF IT?
IT ISN'T LIKE THAT, LIEUTENANT.
YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE THE EDGE.
TO BE STRONGER. FASTER.
TO NEVER BE HURT.

WE FOUND THE BODY IN THE UNDERCITY. HE HAD MERC BODYGUARDS. DIDN'T HELP HIM.
THERE WERE NO mph VALUABLES, SO WE SUSPECTED oof ROBBERY, come on you effing piece of junk....
ALLOW ME.
FWNK!
NICE, HUH? WE HAD TO I.D. HIM FROM HIS DNA. EVEN A SUIT DOESN'T DESERVE THIS.
H-HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
HE WAS SHOT SEVERAL TIMES IN THE HEAD AND UPPER BODY WE THINK THE REST WAS TO MAKE HIM UNRECOGNIZABLE.
YOU'LL FIND THEY'RE ORDINARY BALL BEARINGS, LIEUTENANT. AND THEY WEREN'T SHOT. THEY WERE THROWN.
WE FOUND THESE IN THE BODY. WE'RE STILL WAITING ON BALLISTICS.
BY A CYBORG?
YES, IT'S LESS OBVIOUS THAN A GUN, AND QUIETER. ONLY A FEW OF US USE THEM.
LIKE THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME. DAMN YOU DOLF, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?


TO THE SUITS, THE SAIYUBOGU WERE EQUIPMENT, TO BE USED. TO OTHER SAIYUBOGU, YOU WERE COMPETITION FOR THE BOUNTIES THAT WOULD SET THEM FREE.
THEN THERE WAS DOLF.
SEE THAT BRIGHT STAR, PI?
HE WAS ALSO A SAIYUBOGU, BUT HE WAS DIFFERENT.
THEY'RE BUILDING STARSHIPS UP THERE. I'M GOING TO BE ON ONE SOMEDAY.
HE TREATED ME LIKE I WAS SPECIAL.
WILL YOU COME WITH ME?
LIKE I WAS A PERSON.
TO THE STARS?
WE BECAME FRIENDS.
THEN WE WERE LOVERS.
TO THE STARS.
HE BOUGHT OUT HIS CONTRACT SOON AFTER THAT. THEN HE DISAPPEARED.
THERE WERE RUMORS, OF COURSE. SOME SAID HE WAS IN SPACE. OTHERS SAID HE WAS FIGHTING IN SOME GOV WAR.
SOMEONE SAID HE DIED.

AND NOW I'D HAVE TO FIND THE TRUTH.
I WONDERED WHAT A HIGH-RANKING DOMAIYOSHI SUIT WAS DOING IN THE UNDERCITY, BUT NOT FOR LONG.
SOME OF THE SUITS HAD EXOTIC TASTES. AND THERE WERE PLACES IN THE UNDERCITY THAT CATERED TO THEM.
MAYBE THEIR GOLDEN BOY WASN'T QUITE SO GOLDEN. MAYBE...
BRREEEEEEEEEP!!
MY MASTER'S VOICE.
NO SUCH LUCK.
GO GET HIM, PI.
WHY DID YOU DO IT, DOLF?
HELLO, RYU.
JUST THOUGHT I'D LET YOU KNOW WE GOT A DNA PRINT OFF THOSE BEARINGS.
PLEASE LET ME BE WRONG.
IF I REFUSED, OR LET HIM GET AWAY, THEY'D SAY I WAS UNRELIABLE. I'D NEVER GET THE BIG ASSIGNMENTS. I COULD BE STUCK HERE FOREVER.
THEY HAD SET THE PRICE FOR MY FREEDOM. AND IT WAS TO BE THE ONLY ONE I EVER LOVED.
DAMN YOU, DOLF.
DAMN YOU, DOMAIYOSHI.

To be continued...

Here Comes A Candle...

In the Course of mine Employment, I was requested to visit ye Shoppe of the Jackal Anton. One Day, while waiting for him to Attend to an Important Customer —
Kiss my Bricks
I chanced upon a Detail in the Life of ye Towne, which had hitherto escaped my Notice.
DRESS TO OPPRESS
CLOTHIERS AFTER A FASHION
PINCHBOTTOM AND SONS FINE FURNITURE
7
Wiggs
A PLEASURE, SIR, AS ALWAYS.
Hair Today
30 Days Toupée
HOW MAY I SERVE YOU TODAY?
ANTON, ARE YOU AWARE THAT THIS TOWN MAY ACTUALLY ACQUIRE A SOCIAL SEASON?
YES INDEED! AMONG THE UPPER CLASS IN THE CAPITAL, IT SEEMS RUSTICITY IS TO BE THIS YEAR'S VOGUE.
FUR SALE OR RENT
I ADORE THE COUNTRYSIDE! EVERYTHING THERE IS SO -- UM -- AH -- SO NATURAL! DON'T YOU AGREE, DARLING?
BUT YES!
TIS NO SILLIER THAN LAST YEAR'S PASSION FOR GLASS SLIPPERS, EH?
DID I MENTION THE EXCELLENT IMPRESSION I MADE IN THE CAPITAL?

THIS BRINGS US TO MY PURPOSE IN COMING.
I SEEK A BIT OF-- SHALL WE SAY, ENDOWMENT?
IN A CERTAIN AREA?
Retail Selection
AH! LET ME DIRECT YOUR HONOR'S ATTENTION TO THE NEWEST ARRIVALS IN THIS SECTION.
PERUSE THEM IF YOU WILL, WHILE I STEP INTO THE BACK FOR ONLY A MOMENT.
At First, I took the poor Fellow waiting with me, to be a Customer.
BUT SO BITTER-LOOKING! AND HARDLY PROSPEROUS ENOUGH TO AFFORD ONE OF ANTON'S "CREATIONS."
WE'RE NEARLY DONE, BIRCH, BUT CAN YOUR EMPLOYER'S BUSINESS WAIT 'TIL I DEAL WITH THIS SELLER, HERE? OR WILL YOU RETURN LATER?
I'LL WAIT. THE TRIP BACK IS COLD.
AT LEAST IT'S WARM IN HERE, EH? JUST WHAT IS IT YOU SELL?
DON'T ANSWER, THEN. IT ISN'T MY BUSINESS, ANYHOW.
PRAY FORGIVE THE DELAY, SIR.
AH, YES ANTON, THIS TIME OF YEAR, THE NOBLES GLITTER IN THE CAPITAL, BUT COME SUMMER — WHO KNOWS?
WHEN OUR OWN LORD THOMAS RETURNS TO CARABAS HALL WITH HIS HIGHBORN BELLE, WILL THAT NOT ATTRACT THEM HITHER?
ABOUT HIS LORDSHIP SIR, — DO YOU KNOW WHETHER IT'S TRUE WHAT I'VE HEARD? THAT HE'S KILLED A FULL DOZEN OPPONENTS IN DUELLING?
OH! -AH- AHEM OF COURSE IT'S TRUE! HIS LORDSHIP AND I ARE ON THE MOST INTIMATE OF TERMS. HE KEEPS NOTHING FROM ME!
DO HAVE MY PURCHASES CONVEYED TO BRICKMANOR WITHIN THE WEEK.
WELL, AND LET ME SEE THE MERCHANDISE--

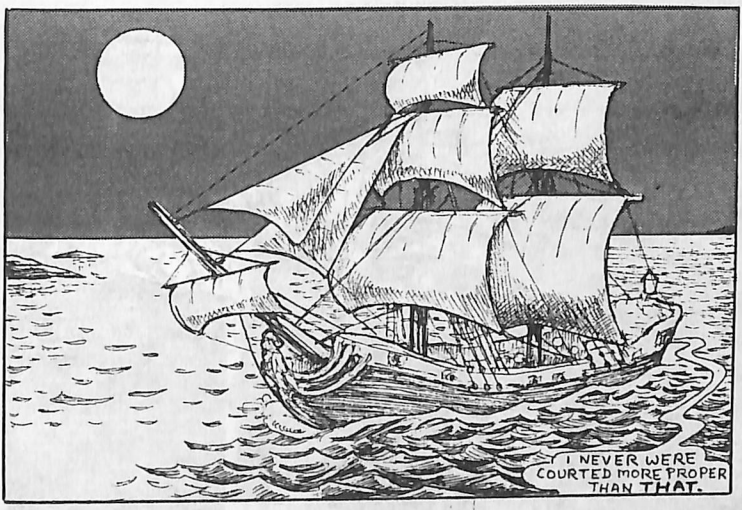
NOT BAD. GIVE YOU TEN FESTOONS FOR IT.
FIFTEEN!
ELEVEN.
DONE.
YOUR TAIL? YOU'RE SELLING YOUR TAIL?
BUT--- TO BE WORN AT SOME RICH FOLKS' FRIVOLITY?
NOW, BIRCH, I'LL LOCATE THE RECORDS YOUR EMPLOYER REQUIRES.
TO THINK THAT ONCE UPON A TIME, I SOUGHT THE FAVOR OF THESE PROFLIGATES!
AND YOUNG LORD THOMAS--
PERDITION! HOW I LOVED THAT CHILD!
A DUELLIST NOW. A COLDHEARTED KILLER!
YET, WHEN I REMEMBER IT, THERE WERE SIGNS. DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR, THE NASTY LITTLE PRANKS WHEN I WAS RECOVERING FROM MY ILLNESS--
I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME PUDDING
OUF--! WELL, TOSH! 'TWOULD SEEM YOUR BED REACHED ME BEFORE I REACHED IT.
THE ARROGANCE, THE CRUELTY, OH YES. IT'S IN THEIR BLOOD, AND NO MISTAKE.
FINISHED ALREADY? OUT YOU GO, THEN. HERE IS YOUR MONEY.
BUT THIS IS ONLY FIVE FESTOONS!
TAX, PERMISSION FEE, SERVICE CHARGE--
COME BACK, I GAVE YOU TOO MUCH!
INTOLERABLE! A NEW ORDER IS NECESSARY!
I'LL JOIN THE REFORM. LONG LIVE THE CAUSE!

IT MIGHT BE RECALLED THAT WE LEFT NEDWIN IN A NASTY PREDICAMENT, SO WE'D BETTER RETURN, BEFORE---
TOSS THIS'N OVER?
NA, LET 'IM BE. HE'LL COME AROUND, I THINK.
SEE THERE? BACK ALREADY.
HOW D'YOU FEEL, QUALITY?
TERRIBLE! :GAGG: SOMEONE GOT AN ARM ACROSS MY THROAT AND--
:KOFF:
IT HURTS TO TALK.
THEN SHUT UP.
JUST REST IT, QUALITY. LOOK, THEY COULD'VE SHOT US, BUT THEY DIDN'T.
PEG LEG, HERE, SPOKE UP FOR ME, AND I SPOKE UP FOR YOU.
I'M GOING TO BE JOINING THEM NOW.
WHAT? WHY? :CHOKE:
WHY?
AW, I'M SEEN ALIVE NOW, AFTER THE SHIP'S BEEN LOST, CAPTAIN WEATHERCOCK WILL WANT SOMEONE TO BLAME.
I CAN'T PROVE I WASN'T IN ON IT, AND YOUR FRIEND WITH THE SHIRT WILL SWEAR I WAS.
I'LL HANG. THAT'S THE KING'S JUSTICE. I SEEN IT BEFORE. COURSE, YOU BEING QUALITY, GOT NO SUCH WORRY.
HE'S FOR BLACKBOOTS TO DEAL WITH.
HERE THEY BE, CAPTAIN--
SO. OUR NEW SHIPMATE FAIRWIND, AYE? DID 'EE TAKE MUCH HURT?
NOTHING MUCH.
GO GET YERSELF A DRINK, THEN.
AND THIS BE OUR GUEST. WHAT! CAT GOT YER TONGUE?
THEY THROTTLED HIM GOOD, CAPTAIN. HIS VOICE AIN'T BACK YET.

AYE, RIGHT LUSTY FIGHTERS, ME CREW.
YER LOOKIN' AT ME ALL FISHY-EYED, QUALITY. DON'T FRIGHT YERSELF.
WE'LL NOT HARM 'EE. WE HAS WHAT WE COME FOR.
SO THE STRAWHOVEL BRANCH OF ME MUM'S FAMILY PATCHES UP THEIR FEUD WITH FAIRWIND'S KIN, AND WE GROWS UP FRIENDS ON LAND--
SO IMAGINE ME FACE WHEN I SEES THIS LUBBER ON THE SHIP WE TOOK! I SAYS TO HIM--
HE AIN'T LISTENING.
CAPTAIN? -FUNNY, SHE NEVER DRINKS ABOARD SHIP.
'TAIN'T FOR ME, SHIPMATE.
CREW GOES THROUGH THE LIQUOR FIRST OFF. GET IT WHILE 'EE CAN. HERE'S F'YER GULLET.
BETTER?
CK! WORSE!
DO YOU MEAN TO PRESS ME INTO YOUR CREW AS WELL?
HAH! NOT LIKELY. 'EE AIN'T NO SAILOR. WE'LL PUT 'EE ASHORE SAFE, MINUS YER VALUABLES.
AYE.
WE'LL PUT 'EE ASHORE.

IT MUST BE I'M AT SEA TOO LONG.
SHE'S TOO BIG! AND COARSE--!?
--BUT SHE IS A CORSAIR, OF COURSE--
THAT MEANS A CRIMINAL! QUITE POSSIBLY A MURDERER!
AND I'M NOT SQUINT, AFTER ALL. SO, I FIND THE LADY INTERESTING! WHAT OF IT?
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT— THAT'S A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, REALLY. SHE'S NOT MY TYPE, OR MY CLASS!
STILL, SHE DOES HAVE THE BIGGEST PAIR OF BOOTS I'VE EVER SEEN, AND--
AND HEH! WOULDN'T GANDER DROP A FEW TAILFEATHERS IF THE CAPTAIN AND I WERE TO---
!! --WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME?
WHAT CAN BE MAKING ME SO STUPID?
I CAN'T BE IN LOVE WITH HER. THAT WOULD BE LIKE--
--LIKE FIXING MY AFFECTIONS ON THE SEA,
OR ON SOME FORCE OF NATURE,
SUCH AS A--GREAT--ROLLING WAVE---
IF IT KILLS ME I'VE GOT TO HAVE HER!

}ULP!{ --- AND I THINK IT MAY KILL ME, AT THAT!
CAPTAIN?
I WANTED TO--
I THOUGHT WE MIGHT—
—UM, TALK.
HAS 'EE COME ABOUT THEM GOODS O' YERS?
THEY BELONGS TO THE CREW NOW, HAS TO BE THAT WAY.
IT DOESN'T MATTER, MY WEALTH IS IN A BANK, FOR THE MOST PART.
IT ISN'T THAT I CAME TO DISCUSS.
OH?
OH. AYE--
NO OBJECTION HERE, BUT LATCH 'EE THE DOOR, FOR THE CREW, THEY DON'T KNOCK.
WHOA! WAIT! WAIT!
NO OFFENSE, QUALITY. I THOUGHT I READ 'EE ARIGHT.
YOU DID, ACTUALLY. I FIND YOU-- ASTONISHING!
}AHEM{ CAPTAIN, HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN PROPERLY COURTED BEFORE?
!
SO THE RICH LANDLUBBER'S WOOING OUR CAPTAIN, EH?
I'M A LITTLE JEALOUS.
WOO!


I NEVER WERE COURTED MORE PROPER THAN THAT.

TAKE ME WITH YOU, CAPTAIN, OVER THE WIDE SEA---
THAT AIN'T POSSIBLE.

YOU COULD THINK OF ME AS BOOTY.

WHAT, AND SHARE 'EE WITH THE REST O' ME CREW, AS I BE HONOR-BOUND TO DO?
I THINK NOT.
BUT HOW WOULD I STAND AS A HOSTAGE? I CAN AFFORD A CONSIDERABLE RANSOM, AND IF YOU HOLD ME LONG ENOUGH, I MIGHT BE INDUCED--

OUT! OUT WITH 'EE!
HOLD! WAIT, HERE'S ANOTHER IDEA!

MARRY ME, CAPTAIN?
WELL, SHIVER ME TIMBERS!
OH, I'D LIKE TO TRY THAT.

ONWARD SAILS THE BOBBY SHAFTOE, INTO THE NIGHT. FORTUNATELY, ANY SHIVERING OF TIMBERS IS DONE IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE ONLY.

BY NOW, OF COURSE, THE *NINTH* LORD PUSS-IN-BOOTS OF CARABAS HALL HAS MADE HIS ARRIVAL IN THE CAPITAL WITH HIS STEPMOTHER, TO BEGIN A COURTSHIP WHOSE OUTCOME HAS BEEN DETERMINED LONG YEARS BEFORE.

WELCOME
DRIVE SLOWLY
BUY SOMETHING

INDEED, THIS IS THE CITY WHERE THE KING AND THE HOLDERS OF THE HIGHEST TITLES IN THE LAND SHAPE THE DESTINIES OF THOUSANDS--- AMID THE TWITTER OF ROCOCO LAUGHTER, AND A PLETHORA OF EXCESSIVELY FLOWERY NARRATION.

FROM THE MOMENT OF THEIR ARRIVAL, THE NEWCOMERS RECEIVE THE MOST LAVISH HOSPITALITY, NOT TO MENTION THE MOST MINUTE SCRUTINY. THIS IS THE PARTY SEASON, WHEN ANY NOVELTY IS APPRECIATED.

THOMAS IS INTRODUCED, EVER SO CORRECTLY INTO COMPANY FAR DIFFERENT FROM THAT IN WHICH HIS BROTHER HAS SO RECENTLY FOUND HIMSELF.

SO, THIS IS THE YOUNG SUITOR ABOUT WHOM WE'VE HEARD SO MUCH.

YOUR GRACE--

WHY, YES I AM! HOW CLEVER OF YOU TO KNOW MY NAME.

OH! NOT AT ALL, MADAME.

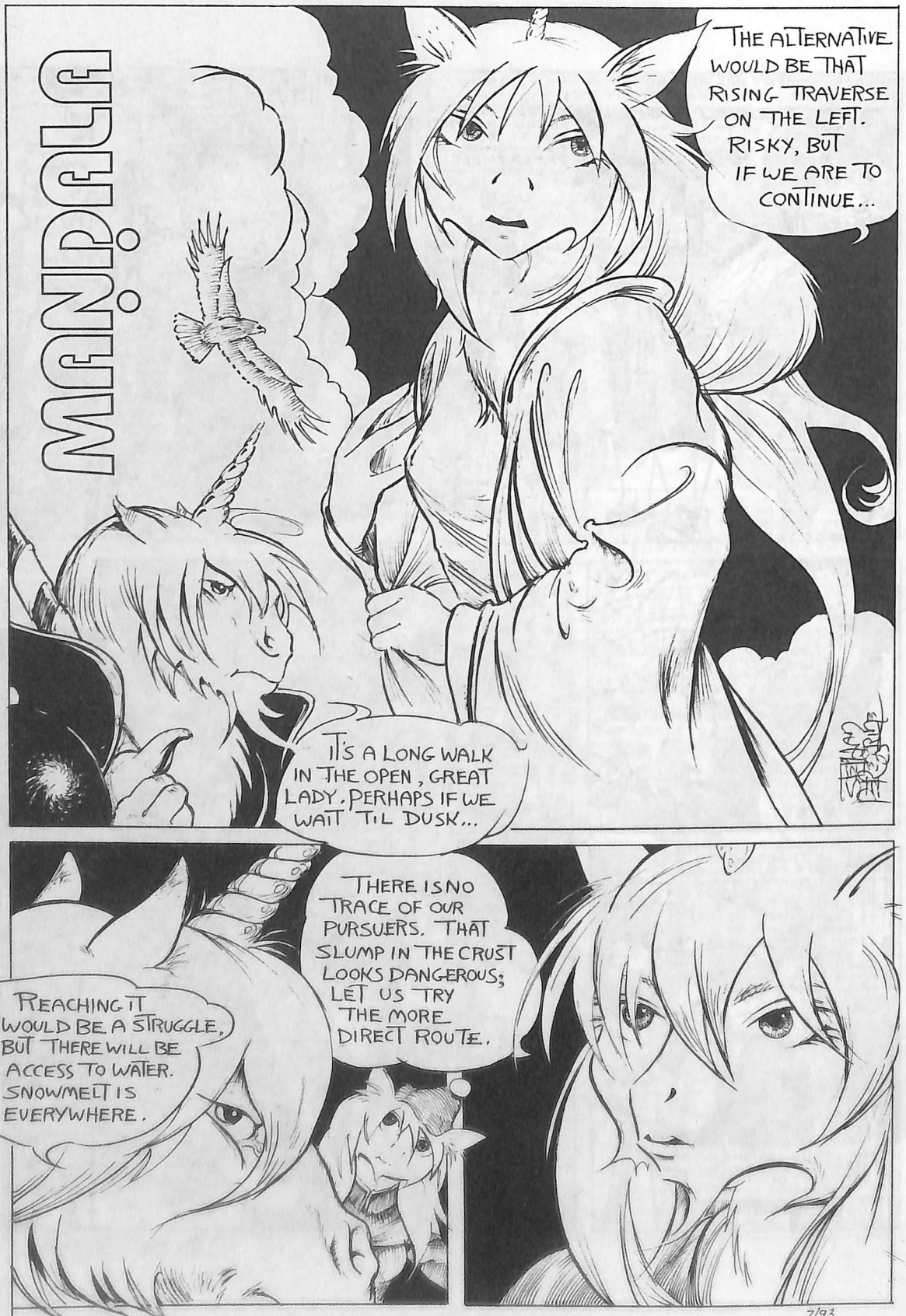
AND HOW BECOMINGLY MODEST.

MILADY IS TOO KIND.

YOU KNOW ENOUGH FLATTERY TO BE CHARMING, BUT NOT SO MUCH AS TO BE FULSOME. I APPROVE.

HIS DEPORTMENT HAS ALREADY WON HIM A SIGN OF HIGH FAVOR IN THIS MANNERED SOCIETY.
DO YOU KNOW WHO SHE IS?
OBVIOUSLY A VERY GREAT LADY. 'TWAS AN HONOR TO KISS HER FLIPPER.
QUITE! WHO ELSE TRAVELS IN SUCH STATE, WITH HER SHEEP OF ARABY?
YOUR FORTUNE IS MADE, MY DEAR! THE KING HAS SENT YOU HIS SEAL OF APPROVAL.
BUT THERE IS ONE, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, WHOM I WOULD MEET.
HE MEANS YOUR DAUGHTER, MALKIN.
CERTAINLY HE DOES! I AM SPEAKING IN JEST, BUT SHE OUGHT TO BE HERE!
THE TIME IS AT HAND, THEN!
YOU'LL BE PRESENTED TO HIS MAJESTY ON THE MORROW--
YES--
--AND LORD A'LEAPING OF THE HOUSE OF ESTERBUNNY, HE SENDS HIS REGRETS. THE INFIRMITIES OF AGE---
OF COURSE, BUT--
SEVERAL OF THE LADIES HAVE ABSENTED THEMSELVES FROM OUR LITTLE GATHERING.
UPON MY WORD, LADY BOUFFANT, YOUR SEX IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND!
AND YOURS, LORD PIFFLE, IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE.

To Be Continued....


MANDALA
THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE THAT RISING TRAVERSE ON THE LEFT. RISKY, BUT IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE...
IT'S A LONG WALK IN THE OPEN, GREAT LADY. PERHAPS IF WE WAIT TIL DUSK...
THERE IS NO TRACE OF OUR PURSUERS. THAT SLUMP IN THE CRUST LOOKS DANGEROUS; LET US TRY THE MORE DIRECT ROUTE.
REACHING IT WOULD BE A STRUGGLE, BUT THERE WILL BE ACCESS TO WATER. SNOWMELT IS EVERYWHERE.
7/93

I WANT TO TRUST MY LUCK. THE ORACLE SAID I CANNOT DIE BEFORE-
AWK! NOT IN FRONT OF SUSTAZIE, GREAT LADY!
UM, YES. A PITY WE LOST THE PACKS. STILL, I THINK LUCK WILL CARRY US TO NYALAM. THERE WILL BE HELP AND PROVISIONS.
MY NAME IS STACY. I'M AN AMERICAN.
NYALAM. WILL THEY WELCOME US?
THE GOVERNOR IS A FRIEND OF MY FAMILY. FOR HIS LOYALTY TO OUR CLAN, HE WAS EXILED TO THIS WASTELAND BY MINISTER KARSHAN.

ON WE GO!
IF YOU WERE PINNED DOWN, YOU COULDN'T FLY, COULD YOU?
SU-STAY-ZEE! PLEASE KEEP UP!
AFTER ALL THIS TIME, SHE STILL CAN'T PRONOUNCE MY NAME.
SO COLD! I'D KILL FOR A CHEESE-BURGER...
I WASN'T ALWAYS AN UNGULATE, YOU KNOW!

CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE...
HUH?
WELL... HERE'S A HOWD-YOU-DO...
BUNNIES... NO MOUNTS. PROBABLY DESERTERS. ÖZU OR PJOI, MOST LIKE: FILTH.
BANDITS. TWO CROSS-BOWS, A GLAVE, SWORDS.
SO IS! GO, DO, THEN WE TAKE.
BET I CAN HIT THAT BEGGAR FROM HERE. ERIK! LOOK!
WHY DO THIS? HE IS NO THREAT., PLEASE...
SIS?
...A RUSE?
HELP HIM.

WATCH THIS!
THERE IS NO NEED!
HELP HIM, I SAY!
SIGH. IT WOULD BE WISE IF YOU CHOSE TO REMAIN CONCEALED, LADY.
IF YOU'RE GUNNA DO SOMETHING, YOU BETTER...
DO IT NOW!

NOW LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
WHAT ARE YOU-?
GAH!

GASP!
KNIGHT! HEAR ME!!!
I AM NOT A BANDIT!!!
SIR! I AM GUARDSMAN ERIK OF BORDER STATION TWELVE!
TWO WEEKS AGO, STATION TWELVE WAS DESTROYED BY AN AVALANCHE...

DROP YOUR WEAPONS, GUARDS-MAN!
WE WERE THE SOLE SURVIVORS.
I MUST REPORT TO FORT AZUMENE!...
HELP ME!
HE DRANK FROM THE COPPER LAKE!
...I THINK HE IS MAD!
NO!
I WAS HOPING TO FIND A CARAVAN OR ENCAMPMENT IN ORDER TO COMMANDEER A MOUNT, BUT I WAS FORCED TO TRAVEL WITH *THEM*... THEY WERE UNCONTROLABLE. WHAT WAS I TO DO? I AM NO SLAYER...

KNIGHT! DESIST!
OH!
HE CAN DO NO MORE HARM... SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY: AVOID CREATING FURTHER KARMA OF KILLING.
I SAVED YOUR LIFE, SAVAGE!
..HOW RUDE...
PLEASE... HELP ME...
THANK YOU! BUT NOW I AM RESCUED; MORE BLOODSHED IS UNNECESSARY.
A NOVEL SENTIMENT.
PISH.
WHO ARE YOU, BEGGAR?
MY NAME IS, 'MIND-LIKE-THE-SKY,' A WANDERING MENDICANT. 'CLOUD-APPARITION MONASTERY' IS NEARBY. THERE IS A DOCTOR...
YOU ARE SERIOUSLY HURT!
ARE YOU A PRIEST?
NOW HEAR THE GREAT MANTRA THAT PREVENTS REBIRTH IN THE LOWER REALMS!!!!
LISTEN!
DO I NEED HELP? WATCH THIS!
YAH

URK
VERMIN'S FATE!
REVEREND SIR, WE REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.
CERTAINLY!
NOT FATE... IT IS POSSIBLE TO PURIFY EVIL KARMA...
LADY- DO NOT SHOW YOURSELF! THESE...
MY RESOURCES ARE LIMITED. HOWEVER...

AND I AM CERTAIN WE MAY RELY ON THIS GENTLE-MAN..
LET US UTILIZE WHAT LIES AT HAND...
DO NOT LOOK UPON ME AGAIN.
IRON-THAT FLIES! BEHOLD THE GERM OF VICTORY! NO SENSE IN WASTING TALENT.
BUT...
GUARDSMAN! YOU ARE HEREBY CON-SCRIPTED INTO THE NEW ARMY OF LUNG-SRINGSAHKA. SERVE WITH LOYALTY, VIM, AND COURAGE!
BUT...
TROOP, YOU ARE TO ADDRESS ME AS "EXCELLENCY" OR "LORD GENERAL".
FURTHER IMPUDENCE WILL BE REGARDED AS TREASON.

SIR, WE ARE IN NEED.
YES, BUT FOR THE DEAD, I MUST FIRST RECITE THE PITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAVIGATING THE AFTER-DEATH-STATE.
THE DEATH RITES WILL SOON BE OVER, AND THE YOGIN WILL LEAD US TO THE MONASTERY; THE MONKS WILL BE DISCRETE, I TRUST.
UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE NOTHING TO EASE YOUR PAIN. IS THERE..?..
THE CONSCIOUS PRACTICE OF PAIN IS TO SINCERELY DESIRE THAT ONE'S SUFFERING BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SUFFERING OF ALL...
NO
QUITE SOME TIME.
FORGIVE ME, THE ALTRUISTIC MOTIVE IS OBVIOUS, BUT DO YOU LOVE PAIN? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A WANDERING YOGI?

DEER JOHN

LETTERS TO FURRLOUGH
7272 WURZBACH SUITE 204
SAN ANTONIO, TX, 78240

Dear Friends,

There were two surpassingly excellent comic books published this week, two stories that were so far above the rest that they deserve special attention. One was **Uncle $crooge Adventures** #27, "Guardians of the Lost Library", by Don Rosa, from Gladstone Comics, and the other was the feature story "Here Comes a Candle", by Mary Hanson-Roberts, in the anthology title **Furrlough** #17, from Antarctic Press.

These two stories are so noteworthy that, with your kind forgiveness, I am writing a single fan letter to the publishers, editors, and writers of both, with hopes that each publisher might recognize the hand of genius in the works of the other.

Deferring to his age, I'll speak of Uncle $crooge McDuck first. Don Rosa's story blends raw humor and even Duckish slapstick with serious archaeological and historical truth. He takes us on an odyssey all around the earth, in search of the greatest treasure of all: knowledge. The wise curates in Umberto Eco's Name of the Rose might nod in quiet pride at McDuck's quest...but it is with an American flavor that the story ends, with an ironic conclusion in the style of O. Henry or Mark Twain, for, of course, what the crusty old quintessentiallionaire has been seeking has been virtually in his back pocket the whole trip.

The story is helped along, in a sad way, by the absence of Donald, who remains glued to his television, allowing for a series of mordant digs at the expense of "romance novel" adventure shows-- the sort thet are stamped from dies like bottle caps, all the same, all ultimately disposable.

We, the readers, are drawn in to a quest for the distant past, but are shown how great distances are, perhaps, not as great or unbridgeable as we may imagine. (My grandfather's grandfather was born a few years before George Washington died; the past is still reaching out to us, still seeking to share itself with us.) The recurring motif of the lost knowledge-- burnt scrolls, mildewed parchments, and rat-nibbled books-- is tragic, and lends the quest a desperate poignancy, with the flavor of a rescue mission. But it is not the past -- dead and buried-- which needs rescue, but we, ourselves.

The in-jokes, referring to the Junior Woodchuck Guidebook and Reservoir of Inexhaustible Knowledge and $crooge's resignation to its omniscience, are also a delight to an old Duckburg fan, and those of us above the age of eight can only bewray, with $crooge, our lost opportunities to become Woodchucks. (The joke, of course, is that education is ageless, and Woodchuckery is always open to everyone.)

The art is crisp and clean, sparkling Rosa at its sharpest; but it is the story that inspires.

Mary Hanson-Roberts, in her adventures subsequent to the tale of Puss-in-Boots, takes us into a past, of sorts: an age of elegance, an eighteenth century that would have been familiar to George Washington, had George Washington been a white-feathered eagle rather then a white-peruked man. This is an Aesopian otherworld, a yarn with a moral, a story for the child inside the adult.

This petit conte, this little tale, invokes the sense of nostalgia, but it is a sophisticated nostalgia, and the story is for the compromised intellect of men and women more than for boys and girls.

The story is pleasantly and ironically self-aware-- Master Birch's saucy conversations with the narrative boxes, and the narrative's difficulties in deciphering his handwriting stands as an elegant example. The story brings back to us the innocent joys of childhood-- making fortresses of the furniture and arming ourselves with cookies-- and the innocent fears of childhood-- the strange deliriums of fever and the unquestioning comfort that is given when someone cares to stay the night awake by the bedside of an ill child.

Youthful awakening to adult responsibilities, echoed in the Western World's awakening to the Age of Reason, is made accessible in this Mother Goose-epoch tale. The peccadillos of country life and the petty squabbles for status and for the squire' s estate occupy center stage, and far, far removed are the horrors of war, famine, and death. Only pestilence takes a bow, aided by the well-meaning incompetence of the practitioners of "The Youngest Science" (in the words of the late Doctor Lewis Thomas). Even His (pestilence's, not Thomas' !) clutch is feeble, though, and the pain of death is eased by an eighteenth century vision of heaven, wherein all hurts are eased.

Two stories. Two brilliant stories. Each contains in-jokes, hidden wit, running gags, quips and humor concealed in the background, an element of surrealism, an element of realism, and a friendliness, an amical approachability that invites the reader's desire to live in such a milieu. Who among us would not trade toenails for webbed feet, and move to Duckburg (although not, perhaps, as Donald Duck's next-door neighbor, please!) Who would not find a kind of comfort in a fantasy-perfect Mother Goose Europe, and rejoice in witnessing the laying of the foundation stones of modern science and philosophy?

Each is about animals-- ducks, cats, owls, and a salacious weasel-- learning what it means to be "human". Each is about children, learning what it means to be an adult. Each is about the past; each is about wisdom.

Two brilliant stories. Two of the best stories of the age, and, without any question, two of the best yarns in comics of the year. Hats off to Don Rosa and deep bows and curtsies to Mary Hanson-Roberts. Thank you for fulfilling the promise of the genre. Thank you for telling us these wonderful tales of joyous youth.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Jefferson P. Swycaffer
San Diego, CA

Wow! What a letter! I was going to edit it down for space, but after reading the whole thing, I felt it should all see print. Thanks for writing in Jefferson, we enjoyed hearing from you! As for the rest of you mugs, how come you're not writing?! Let us know what you loved, what you hated, and what you'd like to see more of! Tell us what you think! --EW

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